

# Friday Friends Food Program

**Pine Tree Elementary School is Making it Happen!**



**WE ARE** Pine Tree Elementary is a K-4 school proudly serving 350 amazing students! Pine Tree is in the Avon Community School Corporation located 20 miles west of Indianapolis. We have a diverse population with 37.1% of our students qualifying for free/reduced lunch.

**OUR STUDENTS & FAMILIES** At Pine Tree, approximately 10% of the students are EL students and there are 11 different languages spoken. Our student population is 65.7% White, 10.7% Hispanic, 1.4% Asian, 14.4% Black, and 7.7% Multiracial.

**OUR TEACHERS** are committed to cultivating creative problem solvers in a supportive environment. Our EL teacher works with students, families, and staff to support academic excellence.

## OUR PROMISING PRACTICE

Many Pine Tree students rely upon the school for both breakfast and lunch daily. Because there are very few food pantries in our community, these students are at-risk for food insecurity; especially on the weekends. Transportation to food pantries in other communities is also difficult for many of our families. To address this need, we have created our Friday Friends program. Through this program, we have partnered with a local church which provides bags of non-perishable food items for students to take home in their backpacks each Friday. This ensures that students have access to easily prepared meals over the weekend. In addition, families also receive extra food for the long holiday breaks. This is important as our balanced calendar includes three 2 week breaks during the school year. This school-community partnership has been a wonderful connection for our Pine Tree families!

**OUR STEPS** At the beginning of each school year, students are identified who qualify for the Friday Friends program. Parent permission is obtained for participating students. Our school counselor communicates with the church and coordinates food drop off and the number of participants. Volunteers deliver the food each Friday and it is distributed by the counselor. This is an ongoing year-long program.

**IN OUR OWN WORDS** "Friday Friends is such a great program for our students. It brightens their day when they know they are getting food to take home on Fridays...they don't have to worry about how they will eat over the weekend." - Mrs. Gyspeerdt (teacher)

"Friday Friends helps us because we don't have that much food at our house. Getting the food makes me feel happy." – Pine Tree Student

For more information about our school or corporation, email: [lskarnuta@avon-schools.org](mailto:lskarnuta@avon-schools.org) or visit our website: <http://www.avon-schools.org/pinetree>